

Casio

Anyone under 40 who studied music at school will likely be familiar with the name Casio. The Japanese corporation's affordable, portable keyboards and synthesisers have been a mainstay of music education since the launch of their pioneering four-octave Casiotone in 1980.

Within a decade Casio had extended its range to include digital pianos, and in 1991 the company launched its celebrated Celviano series. Although technology has developed significantly in the intervening years, the core features of first Celvianos still define today's models – namely sound that comes as close as possible to an acoustic piano, combined with keyboard design engineered to feel natural under the fingers. These qualities are also found in premium models of Casio's midrange Privia series, introduced in 2003.

Another 12 years passed before Casio was ready to unveil their flagship Celviano Grand Hybrid series, developed in collaboration with C. Bechstein and described as 'the world's first truly collaborative digital hybrid piano'. These instruments feature full-length wooden keys and a moving hammer mechanism, combined with a six-speaker sound system that delivers the power of an acoustic grand piano.

Casio's most recent release is the PX-S1000, which is the slimmest digital piano ever produced with 88 hammer-action keys and built-in speaker. This supremely portable instrument weighs only 11.2kgs and was garlanded with several prestigious international prizes for design in 2020, including Germany's Red Dot Award.

CURRENT INSTRUMENTS

Hybrid and premium digital pianos

Casio's hybrid digital pianos come closest to achieving the sound and feel of an acoustic instrument. The GP-510 and GP-310 are the latest models in the company's Celviano Grand Hybrid series, offering enhanced sound projection and improved touch response for optimal control and dynamic contrast. Players can choose from three traditional grand piano sounds – Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna – supplemented by string and damper resonances that bring each instrument alive.

The GP-510 features an additional 'Scene' function with a wide a range of preset options.

For example, the Debussy Scene presents the composer's favourite piano in an acoustic that highlights this instrument's mellow, lyrical qualities.

The Celviano AP-710 similarly offers players a choice of Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna grands. Its scaled hammer action provides the weighted feel and resistance of a grand piano without the full-length keys found in the Grand Hybrid models. In each case, the Berlin grand sound has been created using samples from a C. Bechstein D282 concert grand.

All Celviano models (along with the Privia PX-870) include a Hall Simulator

that recreates the acoustic characteristics of renowned concert halls, opera houses, cathedrals and other performance spaces around the world. Meanwhile, Casio's Concert Play setting gives players the opportunity to join a pre-recorded live orchestra as the soloist in a range of repertoire. A MIDI recorder plus USB port for connectivity to Mac, PC, iOS and Android devices come as standard. Models upwards of the AP-650 are also equipped with MIDI terminals.

Pricing of the Celviano series starts at £729 for the AP-270, up to £3,895 for the GP-510. The Privia PX-870 costs £859.

